

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1. (Currently Amended) Biodegradable heterophase compositions with increased biodegradability comprising (1) partially or completely deconstructed and/or complexed starch, (2) a polysaccharide ester, and (3) a plasticizer for the polysaccharide ester, in which the polysaccharide ester constitutes the matrix and the starch the dispersed phase,

characterized in that the compositions comprise starch and plasticized polysaccharide ester in a ratio by weight of from 1:0.6 to 1:18, the polysaccharide ester is plasticized with a plasticizer in a quantity of from 10 to 40% by weight referred to the polysaccharide ester and the starch is in the form of particles or domains of average numeral dimension lower than 1 μm for at least 80% of the particles,

the biodegradable heterophase compositions further comprising an additive which ~~can~~ increases ~~increase~~ and maintains ~~maintain~~ a pH of 4 or more for a solution obtained by placing the compositions in pellet or particle form in contact with water at ambient temperature for 1 hour with the use of a pellet/particles:water ratio of 1:10 by weight.

Claim 2. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to Claim 1, in which the polysaccharide ester is a cellulose ester or a starch ester.

Claim 3. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 1, in which the particles or domains of the dispersed phase have dimension lower than 0.5 μm .

Claim 4. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 1, in which the pH regulating additive is selected from carbonates and hydroxides of alkaline-earth metals.

Claim 5. (Original) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 4, in which the pH regulating additive is selected from calcium and magnesium carbonates.

Claim 6. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 1, in which the polysaccharide ester is a cellulose acetate with a degree of substitution of from 1.5 to 2.5.

Claim 7. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 1, in which the pH regulating additive is present in a quantity of from 0.5 to 30% by weight relative to the weight of the starch and of the plasticised cellulose ester.

Claim 8. (Original) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 7, in which the pH regulating additive is present in a quantity of from 5 to 20%.

Claim 9. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 1, comprising a further polymeric additive selected from the group consisting of:

- polymers or copolymers compatible with the polysaccharide ester, grafted with aliphatic or polyhydroxylated chains containing from 4 to 40 carbon atoms,
- copolymers obtained from hydroxy-acids and diamines with 2-24 carbon atoms, aliphatic polyesters, polyamides, polyureas and polyalkylene glycols with aliphatic or aromatic diisocyanates,
- copolymers produced from polymers compatible with the polysaccharide esters by grafting polyols soluble in starch.

Claim 10. (Original) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 9, in which said further polymeric additive is used in a quantity of from 0.1 to 20% by weight relative to the weight of the starch and of the plasticised cellulose ester.

Claim 11. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 1, in which the further polymeric additive is selected from the group consisting of a polymer or copolymer compatible with the cellulose ester grafted with a fatty acid selected from oleic, lauric, palmitic, stearic, crucic, linoleic, and ricinoleic acids and a block copolymer between polycaprolactone and an aliphatic or aromatic diisocyanate.

Claim 12. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 1 comprising a plasticizer for the starch phase, used in a quantity of from 0.5 to 50% relative to the weight of the starch.

Claim 13. (Previously presented) Biodegradable compositions according to claim 1, in which the ratio of plasticised cellulose-ester:starch is between 2:1 and 3:1 by weight.

Claim 14. (Previously presented) Manufactured articles produced from the compositions of claim 1.

Claim 15. (Currently Amended) Manufactured articles according to claim 14, suitable for the production of foams, foamed extruded containers, foamed extruded sheets, and moulded foams.

Claim 16. (Cancelled)

Claim 17. (Currently amended) A method for increasing the biodegradability of articles produced from biodegradable heterophase compositions comprising partially or completely destructured and/or complexed starch, a polysaccharide ester and a plasticizer for the polysaccharide ester, in which the polysaccharide ester constitutes the matrix and the starch the dispersed phase, in form of particles or domains having an average numeral size lower than 1 μm for at least 80% of the particles, comprising adding to said composition an additive which increases and maintains a pH of 4 or more for ~~can increase and maintain at values of 4 or more~~

the pH of a solution obtained by placing the compositions in pellet or particle form in contact with water at ambient temperature for 1 hour with a pellet (or particle)/water ratio of 1:10 by weight.